

Listing of the Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A dome for a plastic container having a longitudinal axis, comprising:

an upper portion with a flanged finish adapted to receive a cap, said upper portion extending substantially annular about the axis from the flanged finish to a first horizontal rib;

an intermediate portion extending outwardly from under the first horizontal rib of the upper portion to a second horizontal rib;

a lower portion extending outwardly from under the second horizontal rib to a third horizontal rib, said third horizontal rib being substantially annular; and

a grip panel formed in opposite side surfaces from under the first horizontal rib to above the third horizontal rib, where the opposing grip panels form at least two different sized grip areas that enable a thumb and forefingers of a hand size to grip the container while opposing surfaces of the intermediate and lower portions without the grip panel enable a thumb and forefingers of another hand size to grip the container.

Claim 2 (Original): A dome for a container according to Claim 1, wherein each grip panel is recessed into a side surface of the dome and a ribbed area surrounds each grip panel.

Claim 3 (Original): A dome for a container according to Claim 1, wherein each grip panel is a compound curvature.

Claim 4 (Original): The dome according to Claim 2, wherein the grip panel in the vicinity of its widest point extends from a portion of the second, horizontal rib upwards in a curved fashion to under the first horizontal rib and downwards in a curved fashion to another portion of the second, horizontal rib.

Claim 5 (Original): The dome according to Claim 2, wherein the grip panel in the vicinity of its widest point extends from a portion of the second, horizontal rib downwardly in a curved fashion to the third horizontal rib and upwards in a curved fashion to another portion of the second, horizontal rib.

Claim 6 (Original): The dome according to Claim 2, wherein each grip panel further includes at least one vertical rib extending in a curve from above the third horizontal rib to under the first horizontal rib.

Claim 7 (Original): The dome according to Claim 6, wherein the at least one vertical rib is less prominent than the ribbed area surrounding each grip panel.

Claim 8 (Original): The dome according to Claim 6, wherein each grip panel includes three vertical ribs that are spaced across each grip panel and the central vertical rib is more prominent than the two remaining vertical ribs.

Claim 9 (Original): A dome for a container according to Claim 6, wherein each grip panel includes two or more vertical ribs that are spaced across each grip panel and the two or more vertical ribs have approximately the same contour.

Claim 10 (Original): The dome according to Claim 2, wherein each grip panel further includes at least one vertical rib that curves inwardly from the first horizontal rib to an approximate mid-section of the grip panel and then curves outwardly to the third horizontal rib.

Claim 11 (Original): The dome according to Claim 10, wherein a groove is formed on opposite sides of the at least one vertical rib that is formed in the approximate center of the grip panel so that an upper portion of a thumb and forefingers of a user can grip the dome of the container.

Claim 12 (Original): The dome according to Claim 1, wherein the first horizontal rib bows out at the bottom of the upper portion and then curves inwardly toward the longitudinal axis of the dome.

Claim 13 (Original): The dome according to Claim 12, wherein the second horizontal rib bows outward at the bottom of the intermediate portion and then curves inwardly toward the longitudinal axis of the dome.

Claim 14 (Original): The dome according to Claim 13, wherein the lower portion extends outwardly from the axis of the dome and ends at the third horizontal rib which bows out before curving inwards toward the axis of the dome.

Claim 15 (Original): The dome according to Claim 6, wherein the at least one vertical rib adds sufficient structure to improve top load performance and gripability.

Claim 16 (Original): The dome according to Claim 1, wherein the opposing surfaces of the upper, intermediate and lower portions without the grip panel incorporate curved first, second and third horizontal ribs to add rigidity, prevent ovalization and to minimize the flex of the dome under vacuum.

Claim 17 (Currently Amended): A dome for a plastic container having a longitudinal axis, comprising:

an upper portion with a flanged finish adapted to receive a cap, said upper portion extending substantially annular about the axis from the flanged finish to a first horizontal rib;

an intermediate portion extending outwardly from under the first horizontal rib of the upper portion to a second horizontal rib;

a lower portion extending outwardly from under the second horizontal rib to a third horizontal rib, said third horizontal rib being substantially annular; and

a grip panel formed in opposite side surfaces from under the first horizontal rib to above the third horizontal rib so that two opposing sections of the second horizontal rib extend between the opposing grip panels, where the opposing grip panels enable a thumb and forefingers of a hand size to grip the container while the intermediate portion and the lower portion without the grip panel respectively enable a thumb and forefingers of another hand size to grip the container.

Claim 18 (Original): A dome for a container according to Claim 17, wherein each grip panel is a compound curvature.

Claim 19 (Original): A dome for a container according to Claim 17, wherein each grip panel is recessed into a side surface of the dome and a ribbed area surrounds each grip panel, said grip panel being curved around the axis of the dome and curved inwardly toward the longitudinal axis of the dome from the first horizontal rib to a mid-section of the grip panel and then curved outwardly to the third horizontal rib.

Claim 20 (Original): The dome according to Claim 17, wherein each grip panel further includes at least one vertical rib extending in a curve from the third horizontal rib to the first horizontal rib.

Claim 21 (Original): The dome according to Claim 20, wherein the at least one vertical rib adds sufficient structure to improve top load performance and gripability.

Claim 22 (Original): The dome according to Claim 17, wherein the opposing surfaces of the upper, intermediate and lower portions without the grip panel incorporate curved first, second and third horizontal ribs to add rigidity, prevents ovalization and to minimize the flex of the dome under vacuum.

Claim 23 (Original): The dome according to Claim 22, wherein a vacuum induced in a hot-filled container together with the curved first, second and third horizontal ribs significantly strengthens the container and top load performance of the container.